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ABSTRACT

Having an eighth grade class at Holy Angels Elementary School (Dayton, Ohio) open a school bookstore was a project in which concepts learned in various curricular areas were applied to a practical situation. One of the first skills the class learned was how to conduct an effective business meeting. They used their writing skills to write a constitution to govern the operation of their business. In the area of consumer education, the students learned basic principles involved in starting a company. One of the religious concepts taught was that of helping others less fortunate than themselves, as they voted to donate the proceeds of their business to a local soup kitchen. Learnings within the affective domain were also applied as students learned to work with customers and with each other on committees. Leadership was taught when the students elected leaders to supervise their activities. Mathematics skills taught in the classroom were applied when the students operated the bookstore. Concepts learned in art were applied when the students designed posters and fliers for advertising. (JB)

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The small, shy second grader slowly approached the counter. When she reached it, the smiling,reassuring eighth grade girl asked, "May I help you?"

"I need a pencil," replied the little girl.

"That will be ten cents," said the eighth grade clerk. "Thank you and come back."

That brief incident marked another transaction of the Crazy 8 Bookstore Company.

The idea of establishing the Crazy 8 Bookstore was suggested by Gordon Fuchs, a University of Dayton professor of teacher education, to Louise Moore, the eighth graders' math teacher. Five years ago Dr. Fuchs and Mrs. Moore began working together at Holy Angels Elementary School. The team instituted a cooperative teaching venture in which the two educators engage in collaborative planning, teaching, and reflecting as they work with elementary/junior high students (Fuchs & Moore, 1988; Moore & Fuchs, 1988). This activity is the latest in a series of projects in which the two participants collaborate by designing and implementing learning experiences for upper elementary aged students. In this instance the integration of the curriculum is the focal point of the project since students are

taugnt to apply classroom knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a practical setting. Learnings in the areas of religion, math, languare arts, art, and consumer education classes are applied by the young entrepreneurs in the operation of the bookstore.

One of the first skills the class learned was how to conduct an effective business meeting. The first meeting prior to tne instruction was not very successful because all the students wanted to talk at same time. They soon realized the value of learning how to conduct a business meeting in an orderly manner, and they were able to conduct effective meetings when they elected officers, discussed business issues, and made decisions affecting the operation of the bookstore.

The teaching of writing is an important skill which is taught and reinforced at all grade levels. In this case the students worked with their English teacher, Miss Susan Sippel, who taught them how to write a constitution. In addition to practicing writing skills, the students also learned what elements comprise a constitution and the importance of having a document to govern the operation of their company. Several times during subsequent meeting the class referred to the constitution in order to clarity points of disagreement.

In the area of consumer education the students learned basic principles involved in starting a company. They learned how to raise capital by selling shares of stock. In fact each child was able to purchase a maximum of six shares at 75

cents per share. Also the students learned that when they voted, they had as many votes as they had shares of common stock.

One of the religious concepts taught was that of helping those who are less fortunate than they are. When the students were asked to apply this concept to the real world, a spirited discussion took place. During the ensuing meeting when this issue was discussed, the students presented several plans which ranged from each student keeping all of the dividends to donating all of the dividends to charity. Finally the students voted to donate the proceeds to a local soup kitchen.

Learnings within the affective domain are also applied. The importance of treating others with dignity and respect is emphasized. These important learnings are reinforced when the eighth graders wait on customers and work together on committees. As one of the students said when asked what he learned, he replied, "The most important thing we learned is how to work together."

Another affective learning which is taught is that of leadership. Students who are elected to serve in a leadership capacity soon learn that they must supervise the activities of their classmates. At times it was difficult for the students to do this with their friends.

Math skills taught in the classroom are applied when the students operate the bookstore. Adding, subtracting, calculating

unit price, computing per cent of profit or loss, keeping accurate records, and making correct change are some of the concepts the student use when operating the bookstore. When the students apply such concepts in a real situation, they realize how important math is.

Concepts learned in art are also applied in the operation of the bookstore. The eighth graders wanted to advertise different products so poster and fliers had to be designed and distributed. It did not take the class a long time to discover the importance of designing attractive posters.

The Crazy 8 Bookstore may not become a Fortune 500 company, but it does add relevance and excitement to learning. As one student commented to Mrs. Moore, he said, "At first you and Dr. Fuchs had to tell us everything. Now we know how to do things ourselves."

References

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